

New Hampshire Special Education

Onsite Evaluation Report

Final Copy

School Administrative Unit # 7

Evaluation conducted on October 23-24, 1995

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Team Members:

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New Hampshire Special Education

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I. Introduction:

II. Status of Corrective Actions from previous onsite:

III. Issues of Significance:

IV: Citations to the New Hampshire State Standards for Special Education:
(Commendations, Citations, and Suggestions per school)

Note:

It should be noted that suggestions are not considered corrective actions and therefore are given as technical assistance. The district is not mandated to implement them.

SAU # 7

I. INTRODUCTION:

A New Hampshire Special Education On-Site Evaluation was conducted at SAU # 7 comprised of the following schools: Colebrook Academy, Colebrook Elementary and Middle School, West Stewartstown School, The Hollow, Pittsburg School, and preschool special needs programming. The on-site team met on October 23-24, 1995 in order to review the status of Special Education services being provided to eligible students.

Activities related to this evaluation included the close review of all the teaching certifications of Special Education Staff, analyzing of SPEDIS data, a James O. compliance review, and random inspection of student records. Interviews were held with the Special Education Director, Superintendent, building principals, regular and special education teachers, related service personnel, and parents as time and availability permitted. Throughout the visit the team had full cooperation from the school personnel and this helpfulness was greatly appreciated.

The report which you are about to read represents the consensus of all the members of your on-site team. Please keep in mind that this is a "report for exception", meaning that only exceptions to the N.H. State Standards have been addressed. If a component is not mentioned, that does not mean that the team did not review it; it just means that there were no exceptions to the Standards found in that particular area.

II. STATUS OF PREVIOUS ON-SITE: April 1992

Although SAU #7 has begun to address some of the areas cited in the April 1992 report, the visiting team determined that there are still several system wide citations of noncompliance that have not yet been resolved. Overall, it was the opinion of the visiting team that there has not been significant progress in solving compliance problems that were documented three years ago. Collectively, the SAU's inability to deal with some of these basic compliance issues significantly impedes and offsets progress that should have been made. If the reader compares the Colebrook on-site evaluation report of 1992 to the October 1995 report, continuing compliance issues can be found in the following areas:

- Composition of Evaluation/Placement Teams
- The Local Special Education Plan
- Oversights in Policy and Procedure from referral to placement
- Vocational Components on IEP's
- Facilities
- Qualifications of Staff
- Evaluation Timelines

II. STATUS OF PREVIOUS ON-SITE: April 1992 (con't)

This is not to say that no progress has been made. In fact, the visiting team was pleased to note that the communication among staff is improving and there is no longer an atmosphere of distrust among staff, this certainly is a step in the right direction. In addition, staff are now considering extended school year programming and documenting decisions made in regards to least restrictive environment.

III. ISSUES OF SIGNIFICANCE:

As the visiting team carried out its activities, there were several issues of significance that surfaced. Issues of significance are defined as problem areas SAU-Wide that were identified by the visiting team. The first issue surrounds the lack of system-wide improvements since the on-site evaluation in 1992. In examining the recommendations and citations identified at the time in comparison to present program operations, the visiting team found that many issues of noncompliance have not been resolved. Corrections, when made, were often isolated incidents and seldom have issues been addressed on an SAU-wide basis.

The second major issue that surfaced is the problem of staff credentials, and staff turnover. In SAU #7 special education leadership is still new and in a state of transition and there are many new special education staff members in the SAU. Currently there is no staff member endorsed in MR and the only individual holding an EH endorsement is the director of special education, (which is provisional through the end of the school year), therefore evaluation/placement teams do not always have appropriate team composition. In addition, there is currently one guidance counselor who does not hold certification as a counselor, and the preschool coordinator holds no teaching certification, and does not have a background in special education. It was also noted by the team that there is currently no occupational therapist available in the SAU to provide services as mandated in IEP's. Change within an organization is not easy and often creates uncertainty and the opportunity for oversights in policy and procedure as witnessed in the 1995 visit. Since SAU #7 is faced with ongoing changes in staff, it will be essential that the system clarify direction for special education programming and develop visible, concrete steps toward addressing areas of noncompliance of state standards. In visiting SAU #7, it became evident to the team that there needs to be a clear vision of special education, revisions in policy/procedure and inservice training for all staff.

IV. COMMENDATIONS, CITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS:

SCHOOL: SAU WIDE

- Staff throughout the SAU were consistently described as caring, dedicated and child centered.
- Parents interviewed were enthusiastic, and supportive.
- The special education secretary at the central office has done a good job in the monitoring of spedis information.
- The special education director is involved in all aspects of programming and has done an outstanding job in opening the lines of communication among staff.

CITATIONS:

<u>ED # 1129.01</u>	The LEA Special Education Plan has not been revised since 1986. As outlined in state standards, the local special education plan must be reviewed annually and revisions submitted to the NHDOE for approval. The current plan does not fully and accurately describe the districts policy and procedures regarding the provision of a free, appropriate public education for all educationally disabled students.
<u>ED # 1107.03(a,i,j)</u> <u>ED # 1107.05(k)</u>	Evaluation: Throughout the SAU the team found that the evaluation process was not always adhered to in meeting the time lines and record keeping. Evaluation teams are not always appropriately composed, and evaluations do not always meet the requirements as outlined in the state standards.
<u>ED # 1119.07(a)</u>	Qualifications of Service Providers: Not all staff in the SAU providing services to disabled students hold appropriate certification/endorsements/licensure.
<u>ED # 1109.01</u>	IEP's reviewed throughout the SAU had several oversights or omissions and were not always comprehensive.
<u>ED # 1109.03(a-d)</u>	IEP teams do not always have appropriate composition
<u>ED # 1113.02(a,b)</u> <u>ED # 1113.03 (a-d)</u>	<u>Vocational Education</u> Special needs students at Colebrook Academy have limited opportunity to participate in vocational experiences and students are sometimes disqualified from participating in vocational education due to their disability.

SUGGESTIONS:

Due to the fact that the local special education plan has not been revised since 1986, SAU #7 must undertake a comprehensive review of policy and procedure as it relates to special education. A special education policy and procedure manual for staff and administrators needs to be developed that clearly outlines the special education process from start to finish. Maximum effort should be made to ensure manuals are consistent with NH Special Education Regulations and with the philosophy of the SAU.

SAU special education staff should meet on a regular basis, rotating through schools to foster networking, sharing of ideas and supporting each other.

A formalized long term ongoing inservice plan needs to be developed and implemented to familiarize staff with special education policy and procedure. Additional training and support is needed for all staff in modifying and adapting curricula and teaching to differing learning styles and provision of services in the least restrictive environment. N.C.E.F. would be an excellent resource to assist with inservice training.

To his credit, the special education director is involved in all aspects of special education programming. This, however, is an impossible task and more oversight and responsibility for special education needs to be placed at the building level. The on-site team strongly recommends that building administrators take a more active role in supervision of special education programs as well as oversight of compliance issues in their buildings.

As in the past, the on-site team suggests that the SAU consider the development of a formalized pre-referral process (i.e. student assistance teams) to make certain that all strategies, modifications etc. have been attempted prior to making a referral to the special education team. The model being used at the Pittsburg School appears to be working well and the SAU might want to consider adopting the model in Colebrook and Stewartstown.

The SAU may want to consider asking other local school districts for sample staff manuals regarding the special education process/procedure. This might assist in developing a manual for SAU #7.

The SAU should contact the NHDOE to obtain a "model" local special education plan that could be utilized in the revision/updating of the SAU #7 plan.

As in the past, the written special education curriculum for self contained programs or programs that are not a modification of the regular education program, is not a working tool utilized by staff in the writing of IEP's. Some of the special educators interviewed were not aware that the curricula existed until the day of the on-site visit. The SAU needs to take a critical look at this document and revise/update the information so that it can be a useful tool in developing goals and objectives on IEP's.

SCHOOL: SAU #7 Preschool

PROGRAM(S): First Step, Little Red Horse

SPEDIS # OF FILES: 1) 542055 2) 542049

COMMENDATIONS:

- Comprehensive narrative progress reports.
- Outstanding efforts made to self-train/educate staff regarding autism.
- Enthusiastic, caring staff who are knowledgeable about the needs of preschool children.

CITATIONS:

ED # 1107.02(d) 1 file: Missing notice to parents regarding disposition.

ED # 1107.03(d) 2 files: Missing statement of academic performance.
ED # 1107.03(l) 1 file: Missing measure of adaptive behavior.

ED # 1107.05(k) 2 files: Evaluations not completed within 45 days.
1 file did not have an extension.

ED # 1107.07(c1,3) 1 file: Missing teacher certification in area of disability.
2 files: Missing LEA reps.

ED # 1123.04(a,10) 2 files: Missing Record of Disclosure.

ED # 1109.03(b) 1 file: Missing appropriate team member participation.

SUGGESTIONS:

- Provide more inservice training for aides.
- Improved Budget for materials/technology for students is needed.

SCHOOL: Stewartstown/West Side

PROGRAM(S):

SPEDIS # OF FILES: 1) 029777 2) 029868 3) 542053 4) 029975
5) 029983 6) 029934

COMMENDATIONS:

- Regular education teachers seem well prepared with modifications in place and working well in classroom.
- Small school atmosphere with close-knit community support is evident.
- Staff work well with each other and modifications for SPED students using a team approach are evident.
- All staff report they are pleased at how rapid special education responds to concerns.

CITATIONS:

<u>ED # 1107.02(b)</u>	1 out of 6 files had no notation of referral sent to parent.
<u>ED # 1107.02(d)</u>	1 file had no documentation of written notice.
<u>ED # 1107.03(a)</u>	2 files had no signature of MR certified teacher and no qualified examiner signature.
<u>ED # 1107.05(k)</u>	2 files: Speech evaluation not completed within 45 day limit.
<u>ED # 1107.05(k)</u>	1 file: No signed extension evident.
<u>ED # 1107.07(c)</u>	3 files: No regular education teacher in attendance.
<u>ED # 1107.08(a)</u>	1 file: No regular education teacher evident.
<u>ED # 1109.01(j)</u>	5 files: No notation of OT, speech or nurse attending, no related services listed as service provider.
<u>ED # 1109.03(b)</u>	2 files: No nurse, no MR certified teacher.
<u>ED # 1109.04(a)</u>	1 file: 10 days notice not given, no waiver.
<u>ED # 1119.06(c,d)</u>	<u>Facilities and Location</u> The school in Stewartstown is not handicap accessible and at the Hollow, the space made available for special education services and instruction is insufficient in size and space and not conducive to the teaching/learning process.

ED #

34CFR3000.307

6 files: No statement of PE participation.

ED # 1115.03(b)

2 files: No regular education teacher at meeting.

SUGGESTIONS:

- Stewartstown needs PE teacher.
- Inservice training for staff is recommended on making modifications and for special education related issues on a local level.
- Dates are lacking on many documents - many citations would be avoided if they were dated.
- Buildings need to be handicap accessible.
- Team needs to look at appropriateness of coding and placement decisions (i.e. students coded as speech/language and placed in self contained programs).

SCHOOL: Colebrook Academy

PROGRAM(S):

SPEDIS # OF FILES: 1) 542061 2) 542058 3) 397810 4) 542057
5) 027938 6) 545315 7) 526302

COMMENDATIONS:

- Staff are genuinely concerned about the success of the student and their feelings of self accomplishment.
- A change in leadership takes time to process traditions and culture before making progressive visionary advances.
- Staff are child centered.

CITATIONS:

ED # 1107.03(a) L.D. files did not have L.D. certified individual on team.

ED # 1107.06(a-c) 2 files: Missing current evaluation summary.

ED # 1107.08(c) 2 files: Observations were missing.

ED # 1107.08(d) 3 files: L.D. summary report missing.

ED # 1109.01(e) 3 files: Students could benefit from voc. ed., indication that this was considered.

ED # 1109.01(j) IEP format doesn't identify service providers.

ED # 1102.35 3 files: Entire transition component on IEP was generic, not individualized and did not meet requirements outlined in state standards.

ED # 1109.03(b) 4 files: Team composition was not appropriate.

ED # 1109.03(c,d) No evidence of outside agency participation.

ED # 1109.01(j) If students are to be mainstreamed or included in regular classes, there is no evidence that regular class teachers take responsibility for implementing any components of the IEP.

- ED # 34CFR3000.307 Special needs students do not have access to P.E. at all grade levels.
- ED # 1109.01(e) Transition plans mention that vocational rehabilitation will be asked to assist in helping students develop career goals. No evidence that either student is receiving or was considered for appropriate voc. ed. courses. No evidence that guidance services were provided.
- ED # 1119.08 Although the SAU has a written diploma policy, it appears that it is not consistently adhered to. It was reported that some students do not get diploma due to repeated failures and lack of modifications/adaptations as outlined in IEP's.
- ED # 1125.04(a1-6) There is permission to test (evaluate), but 2 consent forms had no information filled out as to what is being agreed to.
- ED # 1119.06(d) Facilities and Location
At Colebrook Academy there is no appropriate space available for provision of individual counseling for special needs students and the space made available for special education programs in size and space.

SUGGESTIONS: Implementation of High School diploma policy is still a major issue and needs to be addressed.

SCHOOL: Colebrook Elementary/Middle School

PROGRAM(S): Elementary and Jr. High Special Ed.

SPEDIS # OF FILES: 1) 026963 2) 542059 3) 029496 4) 029942
5) 026575 6) 027003

COMMENDATIONS:

- Middle School Special Ed. teacher is trying to work with students and staff for best possible programming.
- Students feel that they are part of the school and school activities.
- Classroom teachers make every effort to individualize for students' needs (particularly grades 4 & 5).

CITATIONS:

ED # 1107.02(b,d) (b) 1 file did not have written notice to parents.
(d) 1 file did not have documentation of initial referral to parents.

ED # 1107.03(d) 1 file: Required academic testing had not been done.

ED # 1107.05(k) 2 files: The evaluation was not completed within 45 days and no extensions were in the file.

ED # 1107.07(c,3) 1 file: LEA rep. was not identified.

ED # 1109.01(a-c) (a) 1 file: Present level of performance not indicated.
(b) 1 file: Goals/objective not stated.
(c) 1 file: Extent of participation in regular classes missing.

ED #1109.01(h-j) (h) 3 files: Length of school year missing.
(i) 1 file: Missing short term objectives, evaluation criteria, etc.
(j) 1 file: Missing service providers.

ED # 1109.03(c,d) 2 files: Lack of documentation that LEA invited appropriate agencies for participation in transition planning.

ED # 1109.04(a-h) 1 file: 10 day written notices could not be found. Notice does not include purpose, who's invited, time and location.

ED # 1109.11(a,b) 1 file: There was no evidence of monitoring of IEP.

ED # 1115.02(b,5) 4 files: There was no evidence that shows LRE is determined annually.

ED # 1123.04(a,10) 2 files: Missing Record of Disclosure.

SUGGESTIONS: More training and inservice on behavior management is recommended for all staff.

SCHOOL: Pittsburg (k-12)

PROGRAM(S): K-12

SPEDIS # OF FILES: 1) 029249 2) 542060 3) 029579 4) 029041
5) 029082

COMMENDATIONS:

- Enthusiasm evident upon entering the building.
- Principal is extremely supportive of special/regular education, staff and students.
- Principals method of cooperative learning with teachers is evident in the classrooms and in teachers dealing with students.
- IST (Instructional Support Team) for pre-referral was beneficial to all. Should be implemented SAU wide.

CITATIONS:

ED # 1107.03(a) 2 files: Had no certified LD teacher at meeting.

ED # 1107.07(c) 3 files: Had no LD certified person at meeting (examiner does not attend meeting).

ED # 1107.07(c-3) 1 file: No LEA signature.

ED # 1107.05(k) 1 file: Evaluation was not completed in 45 days, no extension signed.

ED # 1107.08(d) 3 files: Summary was not signed by LD person.

ED # 1113.01(a-c) 1 file: Voc. evaluation had not been completed as recommended.

ED # 1109.01(e) 1 IEP lacked vocational component.

ED # 1109.01(j) 3 IEP's had no reg. ed./related services personnel listed as providing service.

ED # 1102.35(a-d) 1 file: No transition plan developed.

ED # 1109.03(b) 1 file: No LD person on team.

ED #

34CFR3000.307

1 file: Physical Education was not addressed for student with physical handicaps.

SUGGESTIONS:

- Might be beneficial for new Special Education teacher to serve on an on-site team to help her to become more familiar with state regulations and spec. ed. process.

SCHOOL: Out-of-District Files

PROGRAM(S)

SPEDIS # OF FILES: 1) 534095 2) 026823

COMMENDATIONS: None

CITATIONS:

<u>ED # 1107.02(d)</u>	1 file: Missing parent notification within 15 days of referral.
<u>ED # 1107.03(a,d,i)</u>	1 file: Missing evaluation team criteria, academic assessment and evaluation.
<u>ED # 1107.05(k)</u>	2 files: Evaluation was not completed within 45 days and had no signed extension.
<u>ED # 1107.06</u>	1 file: Missing current evaluation written Summary Report.
<u>ED # 1107.07</u>	1 file: Missing teacher certification in suspected disability on team. 1 file: Missing LEA on team.
<u>ED # 1123.04</u>	1 file: Missing Record of Disclosure.
<u>ED # 1123.05</u>	1 file: Missing evidence of parent notification of Rights.
<u>ED # 1109.01</u>	1 file: Vocational component not evident. 1 file: Statement of financial responsibility missing.
<u>ED # 1102.35</u>	Transition component missing from one file. 1 file: Missing components. 2 files: LEA missing from IEP, parent signature missing.
<u>ED # 1109.03(b)</u>	1 file: IEP team not appropriate.
<u>ED # 1109.03(c,d)</u>	1 file: Missing document for invitation to representatives from other agencies for transition services.
<u>ED #</u> <u>34 CFR3000.307</u>	1 file: No indication of PE opportunities in IEP.

ED # 1109.04(a-e) 1 file: No written notice to parents of IEP meeting.
1 file: No purpose, etc.

ED # 1111.01(a-f) 1 file: No reference to ESY consideration.

ED # 1115.03(a-g) 1 file: Team membership unable to be determined.

ED # 1115.02(b,5) 1 file: No reference to LRE.

SUGGESTIONS: None

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS

ADDENDUM

JAMES O.

COMPLIANCE REVIEW

SPEDIS # OF FILES: 1) 029587

COMMENDATIONS: None

CITATIONS:

ED # 1102.35 1 file: IEP did not have a transition plan.

402 Review In two student records there was no copy of court order joining the district.

ED # 1130.09(d,e) District needs to improve documentation of transitioning to Least Restrictive Environment.

SUGGESTIONS:

- LEA needs to have a copy of court order on file.
- LEA needs to obtain a copy of student's class schedule.